[Mr. P. Govinda Menon]

Mr. P. Govinda Menon *(Minister for Food and Education):* Sir, in this matter also I do not propose to challange the statement made by the Hon'ble Member. That in the matter of distribution of Textile goods to the Public of Cochin, probably there are several improvements to be made and I can take it from the Hon'ble Member that there are some delays also in the matter of disposal. I will take him by his word and I state on the floor of this House now that it would be immediately looked into. I do not think the Hon'ble Member will take away Re. 1 from this grant of Rs. 8,661. I would request the Hon'ble member to withdraw the proposed cut motion.

Mr. P. Kumaran Ezhuthassan *(Vadakkancheri):* The request of the Minister for Food and Education is accepted.

Motion, by leave, withdrawn

Mr. President: The question is that Government be granted an aditional sum of Rs. 8,661 under "41—Miscellaneous—5 Textiles"

Demand put and carried

(15) 41-3 (a) Food Supples (i) Establishment

Mr. P. Govinda Menon *(Minister for Food and Education):* Sir, I move for an additional allotment of Rs. 22,953 under "41-3 (*a*) Food Supplies (*i*) Establishment".

As an interim relief, Government have sanctioned the payment of a non-recurring allowance to Government servants. As the expenditure was not anticipated, additional allotment has become necessary under this head. No savings are also anticipated for re-appropriation.

Mr. President: There is a cut motion of Mr. P. Kumaran Ezhuthassan.

CUT MOTION No. 3

Mr. P. Kumaran Ezhuthassan *(Vadakkancheri):* Sir, the printed rather or rather the duplicated paper whatever it is, the object with which I have tabled this cut as noted here in this paper is identical with the object with which I moved cut motion No. 1 in which I had stated whatever I had to say and though attempted to be defended my case against Government has been admitted since it is only a repetition in another Department, I do not think I should take up the time of the House and tire me and others by repeating those arguments, although they are worthy of repetition because an amount of Rs. 22 thousand and odd is involved, which the Food Supplies Department has asked for as a suplementary demand after spending it. That is ground covered already. There are greater things in store. So I do not propose to speak on this.

Motion, leave, withdrawn

Mr. President: The question is that Government be granted an additional sum of Rs. 22,953 under "41-3-(*a*) Food Supplies (*i*) Establishment".

Demand put and carried

(16) 41-1 (a) Food Supplies (iv) Other Charges

Mr. P. Govinda Menon *(Minister for Food and Education):* Sir, I move that an amount of Rs. 36,884 be granted under "41-3 (*a*) Food Supplies (*iv*) Other Charges".

The printed note regarding this is placed before the House.

Mr. President: There is a cut motion of Mr. M. K. Verghese on this who is not here now.

Mr. P. Kumaran Ezhuthassan *(Vadakkancheri):* I think I have got a cut motion on this demand also.

Mr. President: Yes, you may move the cut motion.

CUT MOTION No. 4

Mr. P. Kumaran Ezhuthassan *(Vadakkancheri):* Mr. President, Sir, I move that the amount of Rs. 36,884 under "41-3 Food Supplies (iv) Other Charges" be reduced by rupee one. To censure the Government for the systematic delay in the payment of rent to the persons concerned. I have spared no pains in choosing the words that are used showing the purpose for which I move this cut. My attempt might have succeeded or not. I

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want to censure the Government not in any spirit of malice but for the simple reason that they deserve it. I have a great feeling in my mind that I want to see that the Government do not come in for censuring hereafter again. Now, Sir, let us look at the arguments, printed arguments in support of this demand. Here it is. Under the main head "other charges" sub-head after 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 let us see how it reads. "The claims from owners of buldings for the payment of rent in the last year was not received in time." Please note that the claims from owners were not received in time. "Hence it was not possible to meet this expenditure from last year's allotment. Hence the necessity for additional allotment this year." Now, Sir, how will you defend your first point, namely the claims from owners of buildings for the payment of rent in the last year was not received in time. How do you justify that. Now as far as this question is concerned the payment of rent for buildings taken by the Government which they had taken either on contract or under their commandeering powers which they want for running the various activities of theirs mainly in the Food Department, control measures and all that whatever it is, I very seriously ask why should you wait for the claim to come forward? Don't you know that rent has to be paid every month. The payment of rent must be made on the day following the month and especially a Government which has the good sense to pay the salaries to their Officers on the last working day of Chingam if the first four working days of the next month happen to be holidays, so also during the last working day of Meenam the salary is being paid to Officers on account of Vishu. It is quite unbecoming of such a good Government which has such a sense of responsibility and helpfulness towards their servants, to delay the payment of rent for buildings which they have taken up on a contractual basis. Therefore the argument that the claims do not come in time is something which should not be attempted to be made, as if it is only upon the claims made to you that the debt can be paid. In another connection the Hon'ble Food Minister said that a portion of that amount has been taken by me, deliberately or otherwise. I am sir, figuring again in this picture also as I have the misfortune or fortune of being the land lord of the Government of Cochin in the Food Department, not in the days of the present "good" food Minister but in the days according to me of the better Officer running that Department. I suffered but I persisted in seeing that I did not make the claim. I wanted to test the sense of responsibility and duty of the Government of Cochin to pay their own debt. When they found that the claim is not coming up from this chap they wrote to me that such and such an amount is due to me in the shape of rent for such and such a building for so many months, 11 months mind you, is ready here, please make arrangements to take it. In the case of rent of these buildings in 95 per cent of cases they are not buildings constructed by the rich people and lying idle and therefore rented to Government. In most cases it is the homestead or other business place of persons who for certain difficulties making other adjustments for themselves want to get an income for their sustenance from the buildings. It is in most cases payment due to such persons. These arguments are not worth accepting. Therefore it is, Sir, that I have tabled this cut to criticise the Government for the inordinate delay. I have already stated sufficiently the reasons why I move the cut. I therefore just leave it at the stage of moving. I move.

Mr. P. Govinda Menon *(Minister for Food and Education)*: Sir, the delay in the matter of payment of rent is occurring for various reasons for none of them I wish to plead guilty in spite of the very persuasive arguments made by the Hon'ble Member from Vadakkancheri. There are several cases where the owners of Houses have not agreed to the rent fixed by Government. In all such cases they refuse to receive rent from the Department and therefore delays are occuring. They may file an appeal to Government from the orders of the Director of Food Supplies fixing the rent and the appeal should be pending before the Government and some house owners refuse to take the rent fixed by the Department before the file is disposed of. Even after the appeal is disposed of if the rent fixed by Government is not one acceptable to them, then they keep on without receiving the rent and making additional claims before Government and after receiving a certain amount of rent for a few months, sometimes, they come and make a claim for enhancement and once that claim is made, arrears of rent will not be paid. That is one category of reasons, why there has been delay in the payment of rent and why rent which was due from the Department in the year 1121 still remains unpaid. In cases belonging to this category, I must claim before this House that neither the Department nor Government is to be blamed. Then there are other cases. The members of this House know, Sir, that unless a rent-certificate is produced, rent cannot be paid by the Government to a building owned by a house owner and this rent certificate has to be renewed every year. Therefore, even where one Department like the Food Department or the Education Department is prepared to pay the

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[Mr. P. Govinda Menon]

money, the rent due to a landlord if for any reasons rent certificate is not obtained rent will remain in arrears. Recently, I had occasion to come across a few cases where large amounts of rent were in arrears on account of rent certificate not being obtained. There is a third category of cases. The landlords may sell their house or mortgage their house to third parties and in such cases also, before the new pledge and the new title is recognised by Government, Government cannot pay rent to the house owner. It is on account of this difficulty that the Department wants to have a claim put forward by the house owners for the rent to be paid. That is why, in the note, reference is made to delays in the matter of claims. These are some of the reasons why rent are in arrears. I can assert before this House that these Departments are in no way causing delays of their own accord in the matter of payment of rent, for various reasons referred to by me are standing in the way of the Department paying rent due to the house owner and it is for that reason why rent is in arrears. Unless these things are satisfied rent cannot be paid. There are several godowns and buildings where the operations of the Food Department are being conducted the owners of which never come for rent. For these reasons, rent is in arrears.

Mr. President: It is time.

Mr. P. Govinda Menon *(Minister for Food and Education):* I finish, Sir. I would submit before this House that the Food Department is not to be blamed for the delays in the matter of the payment of rent. I suppose this will be sufficient answer to the points raised by my Hon'ble friend. I once again move that the House be pleased to grant the amount.

Mr. P. Kumaran Ezhuthassan *(Vadakkancheri):* Though I am not fully satisfied with the answer, I withdraw the cut.

Motion, by leave, withdrawn

Mr. President: The question is that Government be granted an additional sum of Rs. 36,884 under "41-3-(a) Food Supplies (iv) Other Charges".

Demand, put and carried

The House rose for the day at 5 p.m.

P. NARAYANA SWAMI

Secretary to the Council

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